

2000

Leadership in the Future: Preparation for Future Generations of Leaders

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MAL 597

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“Using What is Not”

Thirty spokes converge at one hub;
What is not there makes the wheel useful.
Clay is shaped to form a vessel;
What is not there makes the vessel useful.
Doors and windows are cut to form a room;
What is not there makes the room useful.

Therefore, take advantage of what is there,
By making use of what is not.

The Tao of Power

Sherry A. Myers

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ABSTRACT

What does the future of leadership hold? As books, lectures, seminars, and college courses are created, guiding the public through ideas on how to develop leadership skills, we remain concerned about what the leaders of tomorrow will need to know. Will the leadership skills of today apply to the workplace of tomorrow? Will our world politicians be those with the most education or the one with charisma? How do you lead numerous people spread throughout the world?

Beginning with a discussion of two leadership theories existing today that will be viable in the future, we will look at how this challenge of future leadership is met by working with today's middle school students. By teaching students to rationalize and develop critical thinking skills, they learn to channel their energy into putting together what they need to further their education and understanding of the world around them. It is the responsibility of parent, teacher, corporate or non-profit executive, and neighbor to provide the assistance to propel students in the direction that will best use their talents and individual assets.

By viewing the changes that may occur in the world of the future, what the demands might be and what the environments could look like, and summarizing what is being done successfully today with youth, we can determine the course of action that will enable us to arrive in the year 2020 with leaders who embody the best of humankind.

Introduction

It is the year 2020. The Baby Boomer generation has retired and given way to those who fall in Generation X and the following generation, referred to as the Millennials, in virtually all aspects of American cultural, political, and institutional life. In these groups are the new leaders, and most of the followers. They will take the world left to them by their parents and grandparents into the future. As with any generation, to achieve their goals they must be ready to lead those around them, and to lead they must acquire leadership skills.

Leadership is often a learned behavior, based on skill, education, determination, and personality. Because it is a learned behavior, it can be modeled and taught. If we start the mentoring process with middle school youth, the adults of the early 21st century have an opportunity to pass on centuries of knowledge in a way that will benefit not only future leaders, but also the world today. How today's adults accomplish this task is the subject of this paper.

In the past 40 years, the world has witnessed an explosion of debate about the role of leaders in society, creating massive amounts of material defining the various roles of leaders, some complete with laundry lists of easy steps. Today's leaders see leadership criteria that are applied across political, business and personal arenas. Caring societies are asked to respond to various culture changes within their boundaries while working and reacting in a global environment. Technology has challenged everyone to learn at an increased pace in order to maintain a grasp on the various environments in which we live. As we struggle with our attempts to master leadership, we continuously reinvent ways to communicate what we have learned in ways that are effective, and reach the greatest number of people. Translating what we know into a message across cultures is one challenge; translating across generations is another. This paper will focus on working with middle-school age youth of today and how to prepare them for their roles as future leaders.

Of all the questions raised, the most important question is this – How do we prepare youth today for their roles as leaders in the future? Is there a way to transfer knowledge better than it has been conveyed in the past? If we are willing to prepare youth for the changing landscape ahead, where do we start?

Many businesses have been using research to describe the characteristics of various generations of 20th century people as a basis for recruiting, training, and retaining employees for a period of years. As they begin to apply this knowledge, an understanding of how different generations respond to their environments has taken hold and opportunities to enhance communication and job satisfaction have been uncovered.

Following the Baby Boomer Generation, which started after World War II, a new generation came along consisting of smaller numbers and vastly different characteristics than their early Boomer parents. Often referred to as Generation X, this generation has struggled to define obligations, responsibilities, and lifestyle choices to a greater extent than previous generations, and the result has been that they have not felt comfortable with the world of their parents. On the other hand, the generation after Generation X, sometimes referred to as the Millennials, is committed to community and corporation, and believes in a more optimistic future. The difference between the two generations is evident by the experiences of each.

What is the reason for the cynicism of Generation X? Many saw the effect of downsizing, mergers, and insecurity on their parents. Because of this, they became determined never to commit to a corporate entity; the lesson learned was that loyalty to a company or industry was an attribute that is not rewarded. Some in Generation X decided early on to watch out for themselves, to move around in their careers, to take the job with the most pay, the job that could give them the most before they left for another opportunity. The loyalty their parents once had for their companies was betrayed, therefore loyalty to an organization would be nonexistent for them. However, the Millennials offer a new challenge to their employers; how can they do their best, using the best technology, without ever leaving their homes or their home cities?

The idealism that directed their younger years for Boomers is alive in their youngest children and grandchildren. “Boomer moms and dads are setting out to produce kids who are smart and powerful and dutiful – kids possessed of rational minds, a positive attitude, and selfless team virtue. Someday, Boomers hope, Millennials will build according to the great ideas their parents can only envision, act on vital issues their parents can only ponder. These children are not being raised to explore the inner world...but instead to achieve and excel in the outer.” (Strauss & Howe, 1991, p. 342) In a sense, the Boomers are living through this succeeding generation to accomplish what they themselves accomplished while young or could not accomplish in the world of business and politics. This sense of destiny gives them an impetus to mentor this younger generation in skills such as those required in leadership.

As we keep some of these characteristics of Millennials in mind, we need to consider the changing world around us. The explosion of e-commerce, defined as the worldwide use of the Internet for distribution of products and services, will change national economies, politics and societies. As the lines between various countries blur, leadership skills for business and politics will range from working one-on-one in person to reaching across the wires. Leadership training begins by helping today’s youth prepare for this new globalism and one way to do this is by insisting that American students learn other languages as well as English. Although English still dominates throughout the world, and is considered the universal language of business, it is only because other countries realize that their youth must learn this language in order to compete globally. It is time we teach the same lesson to American youth.

Currently we, as Americans, are learning to work with other cultures and nationalities on a more equitable scale, and need to pass along the benefit of what is being learned to younger generations. As e-commerce redefines capitalism, and world commerce becomes global in every aspect, the twenty-first century company would look like the diagram designed by Kenichi Ohmae, where various pieces of the company are located throughout the world. (See appendix) The question is how best do we pass along this knowledge.

By teaching our youth the roles of a leader starting in middle school, or earlier if possible, adults will do a better job of preparing this country for a successful future. For this teaching to be successful, an assumption in this paper is that the focus must be placed on the whole person – on their personal assets; what they do well, rather than their deficits. What a student brings to the classroom is every bit as important as what their parents bring to their workplace. Students deserve the same respect as learners as their parents do as employees and employers. All learning must be active, with focused support from community, school, and parents. Learning leadership skills must be no different in its objective and operation.

Students in middle school need to learn critical thinking processes if they are to become leaders in a time when things are changing rapidly and morals are part of everyday leadership skills. Students must be taught not only how to lead in specific situations but to follow those who assume a leadership role.

Transformational Leaders and Servant Leaders are two leadership theories that provide extensive information on the role of the follower and will be covered in depth in the Theories of Tomorrow section of this paper. It is essential first to look at the environment middle school youth are exposed to, and what the future holds for them.

BACKGROUND: Technology and beyond

In their book Fast Forward Leadership, Essex and Kusy state that the workplace of the future will be one where technology is the primary communication vehicle, the virtual workplace will be as common as the morning commute, offices and cubicles will be mobile, and organizations more fluid in design. Many of these activities are already taking place in some industries, and they will undoubtedly continue to grow in scope and content in the near future. It is essential that today's leaders keep these factors in mind when they create their corporate, political, and personal visions.

It cannot be stated more strongly that technology is the fuel for future change in business, politics and in our personal lives. The changes forecast by Essex and Kusy deal with technology and how it affects who will be doing the work: “Innovative leaders are positioning their organizations for an onslaught of non-core staff – temporary and contract” (p.13). It would be difficult to say how many industries will see significant changes in the next twenty years in the way people will be working for them. Some industries may never see anything other than core staff, but there are indications that the probability exists for a mixture of employee relationships for many industries.

According to Essex and Kusy, trends that are driving this change in workplace personnel include:

- * Technology linking information to people
- * Raising customer expectations for speed, quality and cost effectiveness
- * Talent is more critical for competition, yet hard to retain and recruit
- * Speed goes beyond development to training and information utilization
- * Staff requires more balance in life
- * Workforce, work, and marketplace globalization (p. 12)

What does this mean for the leaders of the future? For leaders in the business realm, it indicates that the current trend of using non-core employees, those who work for a company on a temporary basis, will expand. Core employees will continue to provide stability of skills that are fundamental to the organization, including management of people. The role of their non-core counterparts is to provide the skills that need to be continuously updated by education; but more importantly by experience resulting from a variety of job functions.

The best example of this in the late twentieth-century was the use of hired programmers to alleviate the potential catastrophe caused by the Y2K bug, brought on by faulty computer software programs written in obsolete languages. The ideal situation mentioned by Kusy and Essex will be that both core and non-core employees will work fewer hours that will be neither sequential nor during the eight hour shift that has been the norm since

labor laws were written early in the century. As technology provides greater efficiency and employees are more liquid, in their movements between companies and industries, business will be able to compete on a global basis and employ people from throughout the world in their organizations to the desired benefit of all, thus giving Ohmae's diagram of global business life.

Our employment relationship structure is only one concern. In the article "The Next 20 Years in Technology", Ian Pearson states that by 2020 new babies can expect to live well over 100 years and perhaps to 130. (p.15) This means that as mortality rates decline, and subsequent morbidity rates increase because we are living longer, humankind will need to rethink and modify the way we work and how long we work. Pearson also believes people will focus much more on interpersonal roles at work since their time will be freed as technology takes a larger role in completing tasks that have been manually done in the past. Whether we work for more years and succumb to an illness or accident or spend thirty years unemployed in good or bad health may make the difference in what is accomplished in the workplace and in our personal lives. The talent that Kusy and Essex discuss will be involved with making sure the job is done for the benefit of everyone and values will play a significant factor on whether as many people benefit as possible.

One result of this focus could be expanded leadership roles across the workplace, leadership that is more situational than driven by the organization chart. Pearson states that staff will be hired on a project-by-project basis and that advanced communications will allow us to work together from anywhere in the world as if they were in the same office. If this is the case, the leadership role will take on many new dimensions over time (while working with project-oriented workers), and space, (where workers are spread across the world). Pearson states too that we will change jobs frequently but will not want to move each time. Therefore, the result is that community will change and have a ripple effect on schools, the economy and politics on a local and national basis. This dynamic can lead to an increased sense of local ownership as people become less mobile and stay in one city or state longer, taking part in activities around them, or can lead to the withdrawal into a virtual community.

Preparing middle school youth includes increasing the value of education from a variety of educational institutions. Yesterday and today's leaders are not the result of education in just our top universities, but in all of our colleges, vocational institutions and trade schools, and tomorrow needs all of these same institutions to continue growth into the future. As a society, we must continue to support education at every level and encourage all who seek education to attain their desired level.

According to Piotr Gillert, reporting in *Rzeczpospolita* in January 2000, "In early 1999, China had 2 million Internet subscribers. At the end of the year the number doubled, and about 33 million are expected to be on-line by 2003." (World Press Review, March 20, 2000, p 15) Although the access to the Internet from throughout the world is varied, with many in Africa being still without the phone lines necessary for Internet access, businesses and politicians are optimistic that e-commerce will become the way of the future for most countries, enhancing trade and equalizing access to commercial goods. Tomorrow's leaders must keep in mind, though, that the ability to purchase does not make a person a stronger world citizen.

It is not just doing business that will indicate what technology has changed in the way our lives transpire. Important to keep in mind is the prediction that "cyberspace will increasingly affect every area of our lives, with 75% of the world's population using the Internet by 2020." (Pearson, 1997, p. 18) Many connections now through the Internet are in the form of social contact, including chat rooms with people physically removed from each other by continents in some cases. As communications grow, it will be a challenge to keep these communications open, and perhaps even more of a challenge to communicate what we intend to convey, whether because of cultural differences or language barriers. A new global language will need to develop that will cross ethnic, political and social lines. As concerned adults in the United States, we need to educate ourselves first, and then our youth, of the correct and acceptable means of communication across cultures. Transformational and Servant leadership theories will assist us in this process.

Leadership Theories of Tomorrow

The study of leadership throughout the world in the 20th Century included research that extended beyond what many had previously considered leadership skills. This involved looking into not only corporate management and political leadership, but delving into what constitutes the foundation of leadership skills. As part of this search, in the past 20 years there has been an increase in attention, study, and absorption of eastern religions, of TAO and Buddhism, as well as many forms of spiritualism. As western citizens explore the positive aspects of other cultures, there will be more blending of ideas, a more thorough understanding of what works for others, and an appreciation for how all ideas could work for even more world citizens. This education will continue to produce ideas that will increase the knowledge of those interested in the development of leadership skills.

Two leadership theories that explore this resultant blended image are the theories of Transformational Leadership and Servant Leadership. Each discuss the value of the human in the leadership, and followership, role and how best to achieve desired goals. Leadership, as defined by James MacGregor Burns, is transforming “when one or more persons *engage* with others in such a way that leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality” (Burns, 1978, p. 20). Servant Leadership, as a leadership theory, has been gaining awareness in the past two decades as those in power and/or leadership positions strive to change the world around them by empowering others and placing their trust in those newly empowered. These two theories, while not identical, are interchangeable – it is impossible to be a servant leader and not be a transformational leader.

According to The Transformational Leader, by Noel Tichy and Mary Anne Devanna, characteristics of transformational leaders are that:

- 1) they identify themselves as change agents
 - 2) they are courageous individuals
 - 3) they believe in people
 - 4) they are value driven
 - 5) they are lifelong learners
 - 6) they have the ability to deal with complexity, ambiguity, and uncertainty
 - 7) they are visionaries
- (p. 271-280)

Youth are generally aware of their physical environment and open to change, to transformation in any form, and the youth in middle grades are especially open to the absorption of the values indicative of the transformational leader. Examples include when youth become involved in their communities or are inspired to pursue a profession based on the values of one of the adults in their lives. An adult with transforming characteristics will demonstrate the best consequences of involvement and can have a direct impact on the direction a student of middle school age takes in their life.

For both Tichy and Devanna there are also transforming themes, representing the actions of a transformational leader. These themes include recognizing the need for revitalization, creating a new vision, and institutionalizing change (Tichy & Devanna, 1990, p. 29).

The transformational leader creates a vision with the help of those around them, and their message is one of determination and value to their followers. Allowing today's middle school-aged youth to think freely, and with guidance, about all possibilities present in most situations will give them the opportunity to apply focused thought when arriving at solutions to challenges. They must be encouraged to and allowed to ask questions, form judgements, and make decisions early in their lives in order to become active leaders when they are older.

Perhaps the most significant way to teach successful leadership styles is by modeling what works. This historically has been accomplished by carefully observing the manager who moves rapidly through the organization or the politician who wins the most elections. For the middle school youth, this means that role models that choose to illustrate valuable leadership skills must demonstrate what a good leader looks like – to walk the walk. Because the youth are susceptible to their environments, whether good or hurtful at this age, it is important to surround them with positive models and display the characteristics of quality leadership as desired attributes.

Although associated with political leadership, transformational leadership is equally applicable across disciplines. Although the future of this leadership style is thought to be in doubt by critics because the transformational leader's vision is considered too broad, this leadership style provides the grace and strength needed to meet challenges of the future. This is true because of this leader's ability to cope with change and complexity with fortitude.

Developing a transformational leader requires finding a young person who displays creativity, optimism and strength of purpose - one who is willing to see a project through regardless of the work involved. With creativity comes the ability to see what can be done to make things better, to revitalize the business environment, or any environment, to the betterment of all. This in turn creates an active system that can be molded to current needs yet remain flexible for future needs. The transformational leader accomplishes this change in environment by institutionalizing change – making it part of the everyday landscape, acceptable and desired.

The characteristics of the transformational leader deviate little from the attributes of a Servant-Leader, and include: (Spears, 1998, p 5-6)

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|---------------|
| ♦ listening | ♦ foresight |
| ♦ empathy | ♦ stewardship |
| ♦ healing | ♦ awareness |
| ♦ building community | ♦ persuasion |
| ♦ conceptualization | |
| ♦ commitment to the growth of people | |

Although there are detractors to the idea of a servant leader who believe they are weak and weak-minded, the rise of the servant leadership theory in recent years is tied to an increase in overall spirituality throughout America and other western countries. In the corporate, as well as the political, world it is now okay to embody emotion, thoughtfulness of others, and trust in employees and foes alike. There are those who characterize this as the feminization of leadership, perhaps rightly so as more women have made inroads into the corporate and political worlds. Regardless, this leadership style has been integrated into the discussion of leadership and now holds a prominent place in the vision and mission of many organizations.

Finding a servant leader among today's youth is not as difficult as it might first appear. One of the characteristics of the Millennials is that they are concerned with community. One reason may be that they are the benefactors of a more stable economic environment – unlike those of Generation X who sometimes saw their parents struggle financially. This financial peace is similar to what the Boomers themselves experienced, and the peace the Boomers felt led to significant social change in the mid 20th Century. There is little cause to believe that the Millennials will not be the agents of change. Following the path of a servant leader provides the Millennials the opportunity to enact change in a peaceful way, with consensus amongst the most participants. Middle school-aged students are the Millennials that are currently most open to guidance and can follow and learn from a servant leader as they model this leadership style for the students to emulate.

It is not enough to display some, or all, of the characteristics or attributes of a transforming or servant leader, but the idea is to put into action these ideas by modeling them in everyday life. Leaders in the year 2020 and beyond will be different from the leaders of the past and present in many ways, but especially in what they are destined to accomplish. It is said that the most basic definition of leadership is that followers are necessary. More than ever before leadership will be situational, based on what is needed from a leader for that specific occurrence. When the situation has been resolved, the leader moves back into the team. The transformational and servant leader will sponsor their followers by supporting their needs in specific situations.

These situations will likely involve cooperation from other areas of the world. How would the transformational leader or servant leader work with the Japanese? What about the Germans, or the Nigerians? Do we teach various leadership skills to accommodate different cultures, religions and nationalities? The answer to this inevitability lies in the development of team leadership on a broader scale - across business, political, economic and educational lines throughout the world. Both transformational and servant leaders lend themselves to the use of team leadership, valuing the follower as much as the leader. The environment in which a leader and their followers thrive is essential in determining how each leadership style will work with non-western citizens.

Environment

The leaders of the Millennial generation have a valuable opportunity to learn from the events in the middle to late 20th Century. Beginning in the nineteen-forty, millions of Americans left their urban landscape for a touch of the country: the suburbs. Since that time, people have been more mobile, moving between rural and urban, suburban and urban, etc. This mobility has changed the way Americans, and their middle-class counterparts in other, specifically European, countries view the world of community. Another aspect of this mobility deals with employment. "As never before, people are defining their own vocations – sometimes two or three at a time – as well as their organizational affiliations" (Helgesen, 1999, p.142). People are freer to move not only themselves and their families, but from job to job as well. This all leads to debate over the definition of community, and tomorrow's leaders may need to be concerned with the absence of, or the change in, the definition of community.

Communities in the future may in fact meet the concept proposed by Sally Helgesen in her essay about women in *Leader to Leader*, "They are drawn to a vibrant center where they feel they will be able to put together some kind of life, with or without the long-term commitment of an employer" (P. 142). Today community is no longer a physicality – it involves with whom you spend your time, not necessarily where you spend it. The

community of the future may indeed involve a connection of people with common interests and goals from throughout the world. An international investment club or book club may be an example of this new community. The result may be a new definition of leadership and its scope.

There will be an increased need for business and political leaders to lead in a manner that is valuable for people of many cultures. The result will be that Americans have a better understanding of what is happening, especially in the countries in which they have the most interaction. The global leader of today, and into the future, will need to address the many natural and manmade events that affect humankind including poverty and plague, generally caused by war, economic instability, and natural disasters. As a leader, it is not enough to sympathize with the plight of people who need assistance, but there is a need to do something creative that provides a global solution to problems that have afflicted individual countries throughout time.

Leaders of the past and today must deal with political unrest in various areas of the world and are often been called upon to choose sides in a conflict, depending on their role. Unfortunately this scenario will always be present and the leaders of tomorrow must learn to deal with these issues as well as others. The first lesson for most leaders, whether they are from America or Kenya, is that societies react in different ways to stimuli and attitudes. One might feel they are leading with strength of character and find that those they are proposing to assist believe that they are not just interfering but demonstrating aggressive behavior that needs to be halted by military show. It is in this volatile environment that leaders will be acting in the future, as we become more reliant on global involvement in business and politics. It is essential that the path to understanding be kept open.

Another environmental aspect of the future that needs consideration is the technology that gives us machines, genetic alterations, and other science-fiction answers. "Hans Moravec, a robotics scientist at Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh, conjures images in his writings of totally automated factories and networks that will emerge as soon as 2020.

These robotic systems will be able to program themselves and compete vigorously with humans for resources, perhaps creating self-sufficient artificially intelligent economies that could squeeze humans out of existence.” (Markoff, March 20, 2000, p. A5) Tomorrow’s youth will be called upon to deal with things unimaginable only twenty years ago and to make decisions based on this new information with speed. It is for this reason that we are all responsible for the future and for ensuring that our leaders are provided with the necessary tools to make these decisions.

Who Should Prepare the Future Leaders

In 1959 Roger Bellows stated, “Leaders are made, not born. Our changing times require more and better leaders. How can we get them? The answer: train them.” (Bellows, 1959, p.195) Although talking specifically about the business world decades ago, these words hold true today and for all environments where true leaders develop.

In the past, it was the domain of business and politics where leadership skills were developed. This was accomplished by being an apprentice, working summer jobs, volunteering for a campaign or interning for a local senator, for example. From here, a person was expected to work themselves up in the hierarchy by attending college and then relying on connections, skills, and education to enter a position where leadership, (i.e. power and/or authority), was the reward. Although this may be the case in many current situations, leadership is mentored and encouraged in multiple activities. Because there is a new understanding of what leadership is, there is a new understanding of how leadership skills are developed.

With that understanding, comes the realization that youth are already exposed to organizations that enhance leadership skills. These organizations include Boys and Girls Clubs, YMCA & YWCA, Scouts of all kinds, and 4H to name a few. Church youth groups and team sports are also avenues for learning these same skills. Non-profit organizations of all kinds are developing leadership and other skills of youth through volunteer activities. Schools are promoting “service learning” to guide students in their

volunteer endeavors. Unfortunately, many of these programs are either unavailable to many youth or considered inaccessible for a variety of reasons. It is essential that organizations such as these are supported by their communities, at any cost, because they are already providing the necessary services for this demographic, and if their existing service work new services may be unnecessary.

One such example of creative leadership building, which has been taking place for about ten years, is through a Minnesota company that has created a program for middle school-aged students to encourage political leadership. This national program runs an essay contest as part of a social studies curriculum in their school and selects a winning essay from each state. All students are asked to write an essay addressing a topic of importance to them and mail it to their national representative and senator. The winner, and a parent or guardian from each state, are invited to Washington D.C. to meet with their congressional representatives. The reason for this meeting is for the student to present his or her issue with any proposals they have that might encourage the congressperson or change their mind on this issue. As part of the program, the students are provided with guided tours of Washington, where they have an opportunity to meet politicians in informal settings.

Another part of the week in Washington involves exposing the students to a variety of other young people who have chosen to take their issue further than writing their congressperson, and have turned it into a national crusade. The program does include work on the part of the students as they meet with the other student essayists and together they work as a team on an outside issue currently being debated by the House of Representatives or Senate. They are then called upon to present their personal findings to the author of the bill they discussed, giving their reasons and their decision making approach. This opportunity does wonders for improving the self-esteem and budding leadership skills of the participants – and the adults there to escort them.

Another example of creating a foundation for today's youth to build on is America's Promise: The Alliance for Youth, which was established as a national non-profit in the last decade of the 20th Century to encourage connection between adults and youth. At its founding summit, the organization listed five basic resources needed in order for youth to lead happy and productive lives. These five resources include 1) an ongoing relationship with a caring adult, 2) safe places and structured activities during non-school hours, 3) a healthy start, 4) an opportunity to give back through community service, and 5) a marketable skill through effective education. This last resource tries to link education with job preparation and economic opportunity allowing the students to develop partnerships with business, schools and volunteer associations while learning essential skills. Although not designated as such, these essential skills often include the fundamentals of leadership, through service learning, particularly when in conjunction with the emphasis the organization has to give back through community service.

In the above examples, everything is accomplished under the supervision of educators, volunteers, and parents – bringing together the community that needs to exist for growth to take place. It is simply a partnership between various interested parties coming together for the common purpose of encouraging youth leadership. Who is actually responsible for the training of youth to prepare them for their role as a leader in their community? The answer is simple. We all are responsible: adults and youth alike.

Why are we all responsible? We are responsible because we are all the beneficiaries of our future. In twenty years, after a multitude of changes occurred, we, all citizens of the human race, have a personal stake in what we have created, or allowed to be created. If we sit back now and passively watch, we may not achieve our desired outcome – and it is possible that someone else's desired outcome may have been reached instead. Adults, especially, need to help make existing programs work, most specifically with their time, to create a desired future.

One model of teaching students in today's middle schools is through multi-disciplinary methods, where ideas are applied across disciplines, interrelating math with geography, and English with social studies, for example. This method makes it possible to develop this new global language as students learn about other areas of the world at the same time they are learning about their own. This can encourage students to expand their focus and apply critical thinking skills while gaining leadership acumen as they help others make connections. Schools are also promoting cooperative learning as a way of reaching more students in ways never tried formally before.

Another method of reaching students is through the Internet. At the end of 1999, the goal of getting all school children access to computers was, to a great extent, met and most students have at least limited access to tools such as the Internet. The Internet as a tool provides an opportunity not only to research a term paper, but also to allow students to contact others throughout the world as peers. There is a much greater opportunity for the youth of today to know someone from another country, crossing potential global barriers.

With education as a leader comes the ability to maneuver the world, as it will be in the present and the future. In the business world this means that leaders should be prepared for continuous change in the early part of the twenty-first century by remaining open to technology and new ideas. "The shape of the twenty-first-century organization is flat, networked, and amorphous. Much of its activity is outsourced, not to cheap locations but to the best producers, the best R & D labs and designers. Core skills – such as marketing for Nike or logistics for FedEx – are retained in house. Leaders become organizers of complex systems – brokers of performance and efficiency" (Ohmae, 1999, p.198).

Providing the basics of critical thinking as an elemental part of each discipline taught to youth would better prepare youth for the challenges ahead.

First, we must find leaders among youth and bring them to the forefront. This can be done, by adults or youth, in any organization where youth are participants by first recognizing abilities and then by channeling those recognized into opportunities to build natural skills into leaderships skills if the youth desires. Presenting a peer leader will

inspire others to believe that youth should be taken seriously when they respond to stimulus in a creative, passionate manner. In challenging ourselves to consider the fact that we are all responsible, and having seen some examples of what can work, what remains now is to determine the best approach to energizing the middle school youth to rise to assume leadership roles.

How Should It Be Done

This section will delve into potential methods of teaching leadership to middle school students. Blooms Taxonomy will be applied to one way of teaching leadership, which will then be tied to ethics, ways to connect with youth and reach them through modeling leadership, and other valuable assets.

It is important first to review the essential skills and values of a leader before an approach to achieving the goal of teaching leadership is proposed. James MacGregor Burns states that “Leadership brings about real change that leaders *intend*...” (Burns, 1978, p. 414). A necessary piece of teaching leadership, especially for the transformational and servant leaders, is the application of ethics, and it is here that essential skills and values will be covered. Ethics properly applied are essential in bringing about the intended change mentioned by Burns. The Josephson Institute for the Advancement of Ethics has determined a list of ethical values and principles, listed below.

Honesty
Integrity
Promise keeping
Fidelity
Fairness
Caring
Respect
Citizenship
Excellence
Accountability
Protection of public trust

It is interesting to note the similarities between this list and the attributes of both the transformational and servant leader. Although not word for word, and often with different words altogether, the implied relationship works to enhance the value of these leaderships styles because of this comparability. It is especially important to the servant leader to be ethical in dealings with others and those that believe in and adhere to the values of the transformational and servant leader reward these qualities.

While it is debatable whether or not values and principles are teachable, trainable or just inherent, it is imperative to impress upon students the values of a society and the principles by which most will expect them to live. By being prepared, they will be able to make a more informed decision on whether they are ready and willing to work by those standards in the future. If they choose not to abide by these standards, they will be aware of the consequences for their choice. Just as in any other arena of their lives, choosing to be a leader is a decision that only they should make. To make this decision middle school youth must grow in their capability to learn from adults.

“I suggest that the most marked characteristic of self-actualizers as potential leaders goes beyond Maslow’s self-actualization; it is their capacity to *learn* from others and from the environment – the capacity *to be taught*. That capacity calls for an ability to listen and be guided by others without being threatened by them, to be dependent on others but not overly dependent, to judge other persons with both affection and discrimination, to possess enough autonomy to be creative without rejecting the external influences that make for growth and relevance. Self-actualization ultimately means the ability *to lead by being led*” (Burns, 1978, p. 117).

The profession of education uses Blooms Taxonomy to guide teachers on what needs to be covered when working with students. The characteristics include:

Blooms Taxonomy

Awareness
Understanding/Comprehension
Application
Analysis
Synthesis
Evaluation

This system can be adapted to teaching leadership. The first characteristic, awareness, is what information is all about. Students need information as much as is pertinent to their age and situation. Information without understanding is meaningless, so how is understanding taught?

As part of their training, teaching professionals discover various learning styles and apply this knowledge in their classroom. Learning styles, very simply put, include whether or not a student learns best when reading, listening, or doing, or a combination of the three. The success of applying this knowledge depends on the size of the class and the variety of different learners in the classroom, and the skills of the teacher. Understanding, or comprehension, is perhaps the most important aspect of Blooms Taxonomy, for without it the rest is moot. It is during this stage that leadership can begin to be taught.

One way to teach understanding to youth is to allow them to make choices- first in a controlled environment, then on decisions that will have consequences to the student. This can be done by involving the students in placing themselves in the role of someone else who must make momentous decisions; using historical scenarios would be appropriate. What would they have done during the American-Iran crisis in which hostages were taken during the Carter presidency? How would they handle assuming the presidency of South Africa knowing that Nelson Mandela was held in prison? What if

they were a school principal faced with a teacher walkout – and they agree with the teacher’s position? Any number of imaginable scenarios could work to give them the mental exercise needed to accomplish these tasks.

One of the greatest skills of a leader is their ability to take what they hear and assimilate it into their personal value system. This is what understanding provides a leader. Understanding an issue demands action and this is the next necessary step in leadership education.

After enacting various real or devised scenarios, action could be encouraged by bringing these scenarios into real life. By involving the students in their own issues they can develop an awareness and understanding and then take control of what they would like to see happen through personal action. For example, a student is concerned with the lack of funding for the chess club, or the junior varsity baseball team, or any specific school related issue. They research all sides of the issue, making sure that they understand why the school board will allocate fewer dollars, or no dollars, by finding out where the money *is* being allocated. They are then encouraged to do what they can to bring about the solution they desire.

To complete the exercise the student then analyzes the results of the action they have advocated and perhaps demonstrated. Whether success is achieved, or whether it is achievable, can be monitored at that time. This gives the student the opportunity to apply what they have learned and conceivably rethink their approach to accomplishing their task. By providing true-life examples, this process has engaged the student. What are the consequences of freeing Nelson Mandela politically, socially and economically? Did it bring civil unrest, and if so, how can you bring about peace? How can you track the consequences? These are all examples of analysis.

Synthesis is the next process in the Taxonomy, defined as the process of reaching a conclusion based upon assumed principles. In our example scenario, this means that the student can continue the analysis piece to its logical end and actually make deductions

based on the outcome. The student then would be able to evaluate what needs to be done to expand the established goal, document lessons learned, or move on to other goals as desired. Bringing this to a conclusion allows the student to maintain a certain level of excited participation for a period of time before letting down for another period giving them an opportunity to prepare for the next event.

How would developing leadership skills help students in other aspects of school? Using Blooms Taxonomy as a guide for leadership training uses the strength of critical thinking, and it is through critical thinking that all disciplines benefit from improved leadership skill growth. Critical thinking has two components, that of developing a set of skill necessary to process information, and subsequently developing the habit of using those skills and applying them. Critical thinking encourages people to evaluate the soundness and practicality of what they read and hear. This exercises the brain, demanding that brain cells expand, thus creating new ways of thinking about what is being read or heard. Therefore, critical thinking allows a student to use knowledge learned in one area to what a current situation by exercising this skill of recall and application.

Many businesses today are concerned with the quality of graduates from schools and are now assuming a larger role in educating students at all levels. One way they accomplish this is by becoming a partner to a specific school. The objective for this partnership is not just to contribute funds, but to participate in the day-to-day operation of the school. Businesses have contributed to schools in a variety of ways. These include having representatives on the school's management committee or ruling group, providing employees time to tutor students during work hours, and giving students the opportunity to job shadow an employee in their place of business. Some businesses offer scholarship programs, allowing the student to work for them while they finish high school and then attend college or help fund specific charter or magnet schools dealing with business.

Business partnerships offer a variety of opportunities for both the business and the school involved. One way to strengthen the relationship between the two parties is demonstrated when the business invites students to work. This can take the form of a daylong program

in which students are exposed to sessions on interviewing skills and completing job applications. When these sessions are complete, the students “shadow” an employee, watching them work for an hour or two. They can then interview their mentor for the day about what it is like to work, what education they needed to achieve their goals, and any other aspect of the business environment. The students come away with a better understanding of why they need essential skills such as critical thinking, and why they need to think of school as their “job” while they are students. Because connections are made through programs such as this, students can hone the knowledge they learn in the classroom, and apply this experience to further their total education.

Another example of a business partnership with a school is using technology to increase contact between employees and students without the involvement of significant time. This connection can be brought about by creating a “pen-pal” arrangement between a specific employee and student; a relationship based on assigned classroom work. For example, a history teacher assigns the class an essay on the Sino-Japanese relationship during World War II. The student writes a page of her paper, stating the subject and proposed outcome about which she intends to write. She can e-mail it to her counterpart at the business partner and ask them for feedback on her writing and research skills. Without having their homework done for them, the student now has developed a significant relationship with an adult, and although they may never meet them, that adult has made an impact on that student that will never be forgotten. The adult has taken a few moments of time to share an idea with them and left behind a lasting impression.

The state of Minnesota has designated ten preparatory areas that include twenty-eight standards for middle schools to follow when educating students. These standards are designed to prepare the middle school youth for their high school challenge. One of the areas is designated Inquiry, and lists the standards of direct observation, addressing information, and controlled experiments. Critical thinking can be practiced in any of the ten areas and those standards within, but it may pertain especially to this area of inquiry.

Direct observation, specifically, can provide the structure needed in the previous application to deliver not only the skill of critical thinking but meet a standard set up by the state department of education.

Teaching a strong foundation in ethics actually begins when a child is born, and continues through adulthood. With a basic understanding of ethics, and the way they effect everyday and extraordinary communication, leadership skills can be emphasized and not only can information be conveyed, but intention as well. Applying ethics to the scenarios complete this learning cycle and ingrain the activity of reflecting on ethics, and other values, in the person going through this exercise. Ethics can be troubling in that some think there are different ethical standards throughout the world, but regardless of your nationality or place of birth, many of the ethical standards listed above are universal.

Currently many middle school educators have advisory times, designed to give the students and teachers time to work on study and social skills, providing an opportunity to cover other skills as well. In an ideal world, this time could be used to prepare students for higher level skills, such as leadership development for those students who were ready and willing to participate.

Numerous obstacles would make it difficult to work with middle-school youth in the manner discussed here. These obstacles include the rise in non-English speaking students. Another obstacle is noted in the number of students who receive a free or reduced lunch, which is often considered an indicator of the affluence of the school. For example, according to the Minnesota Department of Children, Families & Learning, as of February 2000, 73% of one Minneapolis middle school received a free or reduced lunch, and 38 % spend at least part of their days learning in special teams where they are taught by teachers in their native language. Another 16% receive some form of special education during at least part of their days. Although not part of the scope of this paper, it is important to note these challenges to the schools, their students, parents, and communities. Access to programs that can assist them in improving skills can be limited,

though, and expansion current programs that are successful can reduce some of the aforementioned challenges. The emphasis on critical thinking, when possible, could encourage all students to thrive, regardless of whatever language barrier they may have.

It is not only the process of applying critical thinking that will ease any obstacles, but also the involvement of participants. One important aspect of leadership is the changing personnel in leadership roles. American leaders are increasingly pulling their leaders from the ranks of women, minorities, and people of different cultures. These new leaders will need to blend and work with traditional white males and their way of leading. The ultimate result could lead to leadership that is cooperative, group oriented, consensus building, and deliberate as well as immediate.

How do we prepare people for a future when the very values, norms, and institutions that shape their lives will be different? “Leaders can also shape and alter and elevate the motives and values and goals of followers through the vital *teaching* role of leadership. This is transforming leadership. The premise of this leadership is that, whatever the separate interests persons might hold, they are presently or potentially united in the pursuit of ‘higher’ goals, the realization of which is tested by the achievement of significant change that represents the collective or pooled interests of leaders and followers” (Burns, 1978, p. 425-426).

Search Institute, a research organization committed to the development of strong and healthy youth, was created to pursue this goal of uniting the people in the lives of youth. They have developed what is referred to as “assets” for youth in their Healthy Communities ●Healthy Youth initiative. Part of this initiative is the creation and distribution of a list of “150 Ways to Show Kids You Care”; available in the form of an expanding brochure which is distributed by the organization and other partners. On this list are things such as “Listen to them”, “Present options when they seek your counsel”, and “Follow them when they lead”. One of the purposes of this communication is to encourage all citizens to take part in the delivery of training to youth, not just leadership

training, by training for whatever life holds for them. The ultimate response is that all adults need to encourage, model, and push youth to be the best they can be, to apply leadership skills as they can, so that we, too, can become better citizens and in turn model for the next generation.

One current trend in the corporate community is the use of leadership teams - development of groups of upper echelon of employees, such as the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and their direct reports. If the use of leadership teams survives, it should be expanded to other areas of the company, recognizing the leadership provided by most employees at one time or another as they perform their jobs. Based on the dynamics of the future of employment discussed in the previous sections, this expansion would most benefit the company who implemented this strategy as soon as they can. To ignore this possibility would be to undermine the expectations of employees who will be expecting this growth and may leave without the opportunity. If employees began to hone their leadership skills in middle school, this expansion of the way leadership is viewed by their future employers gives them an opportunity to direct their focus when they are employed.

Perhaps the best start for teaching leadership to those who will be our future leaders lies with the “Lessons of Self Knowledge” written by Warren Bennis (Bennis, 1989, p.56)

You are your best teacher
Accept responsibility – blame no one
You can learn anything you want to learn
True understanding comes from reflecting on your experience

One way to develop critical thinking skills, the ability to reason and think things through to their conclusion, to analyze and act on decisions, is by following the advice listed above and mentoring these characteristics for youth. Regardless of their acknowledgement of their position as role models, all adults should be aware that they are role models, if for no other reason then because they are being watched and listened to by youth of all ages. It is the perception they have of adults that helps guide them into their future roles.

Consideration of the future may involve numerous occasions where a middle school-aged student may question the opportunities they are given and the amount of effort they need to apply to achieve their goals. Horace Mann once stated, “Education, then, beyond all other devices of human origin, is the great equalizer of the conditions of men – the balance wheel of the social machinery.” Once this lesson is learned, the future leader will rise to whatever purpose they are determined to follow.

Summary

Will leaders be necessary as the future unfolds? One reason a resounding yes may be in order lies in looking at the reaction a group of humans, regardless of size or purpose, has when their “leader” leaves, dies, or betrays them. We are all leaders and, subsequently, followers at various moments of our lives; we are all members of various groups during our lives as well.

The leaders of the future, western and otherwise, will find themselves influencing neighborhoods, countries, and the entire global community. Burns once stated, “Unlike Mao, few western leaders in the established bureaucratic politics of the west have the heady prospect of making decisions that might transform their societies. (Burns, 1978, p. 404) Although perhaps applicable to the era in which this was written, the statement is now outdated as today’s leaders have the ability, and the responsibility, to transform not only their societies but the global community as well.

This paper has established critical thinking as a necessary ingredient in leadership training. It involves working on analyzing, in an objective manner, with the intent to clarify particular situations as they arise. One of the most significant challenges across time has been the effect of change. Change has been a constant, and it is arguable that without change civilization will cease to exist. The value and consequence of change has entered our critical thinking processes regardless of subject matter and time frame. Using critical thinking to evaluate the disturbances of change is the ultimate goal for teaching leadership to middle school students.

Change has made such an impact in recent decades that corporations are hiring people who specialize in “change management”, encouraging and helping employees deal with change in the workplace, whether it be a new technology or a new leader. Corporate benefits have seen an introduction of employee assistance plans aimed at providing services for employees who are dealing with change outside the workplace, such as drug abuse, divorce, and children’s issues. These are just two of the ways change has advanced into the workplace. Adults are learning to make the shift and embrace change, and this skill, too, needs to be shared with the youth they mentor. How will change affect our acceptance of leaders in the future and will we still honor leaders over their lifetimes, as we do heroes, or will they enter and leave our lives? Questions such as these remain to be answered, but what is essential before these questions are answered is that adults step up to the challenge of mentoring youth.

This discussion began with an introduction to the characteristics of tomorrow’s leaders. I then went through an overview of what the future may look like, what can be expected and anticipated in the workplace, community, and world around us. I have reviewed two popular leadership styles, applied them to a possible method of teaching leadership skills to the today’s middle school students, and noted that teaching is an imprecise term because leadership is most appropriately mentored, observed, and emulated rather than taught. What have we discovered in this journey?

One thing we have learned about leadership and the forces behind it is the importance of vision, mission, and their integration into the global community. As suggested by John Renesch in his book “New Traditions in Business; “...people help to create the collective vision, not merely to make money but because it is consistent with their life’s purpose” (Renesch, 1992, p.176). Leadership, therefore, can come from the soul if it is allowed to and youth who are mentored observe a thriving relationship between leaders and their followers.

We have also learned that in order to achieve this life's purpose we must have certain values and ethics, as our society sees them, and as the global community sees them. In his essay "Growing Tomorrow's Leaders", Gregory Weber suggests that characteristics necessary for tomorrow's leaders include a superior level of education and capacity to work in several languages and experience in a broad spectrum of cultures, and an ability to "excel in 'softer', less measurable areas such as personality and personally held values". These values include:

- integrity,
- honesty,
- loyalty to principles,
- self-confidence and self-esteem,
- tenacity,
- high energy levels,
- resilience that enables leaders to maintain spiritual tranquility amid a climate
- of pressures centered on high urgency and swift change,
- the acceptance and value of diversity with the ability to harness its potential by
- unleashing people's creativity in the service of shared goals. (Weber, 1996, p 305)

The characteristic of superior education can begin with middle school youth where the values listed are imbedded in each discipline taught, thus enhancing the character of these future leaders. Successfully instilled, these values can guide future leaders to do as the prophet Amos directed, to "encourage and sustain those on the bottom of the rung first and then turn to those on the top." (DePree, 1992, p. 11)

The question remains as to what concerned adults should do, to keep current programs viable while increasing access, and to develop new ones that provide more services and meet new needs. Solutions may lie in an extended appreciation for the uses of various methods in mentoring leaderships skills, starting with an awareness that such skills can be encouraged at younger ages and for a variety of situations.

Lewis Hyde articulates the value of a gift, loosely defined as anything received that can be given away again. The roles we assume as adults are the result of past gifts that were given to us; education, values, passion, etc. However, for a gift to be truly valuable to us, we must pass it along, “increasing” the gift. Hyde states that “Only when the increase of gifts moves with the gift may the accumulated wealth of our spirit continue to grow among us, so that each of us may enter, and be revived by, a vitality beyond his or her solitary powers.” (Hyde, 1979, p.39) The value of leadership lies in connecting with future generations of leaders and guiding them to be open to change, to use critical thinking skills to determine their mindset, and encourage them to pass along their gifts to others.

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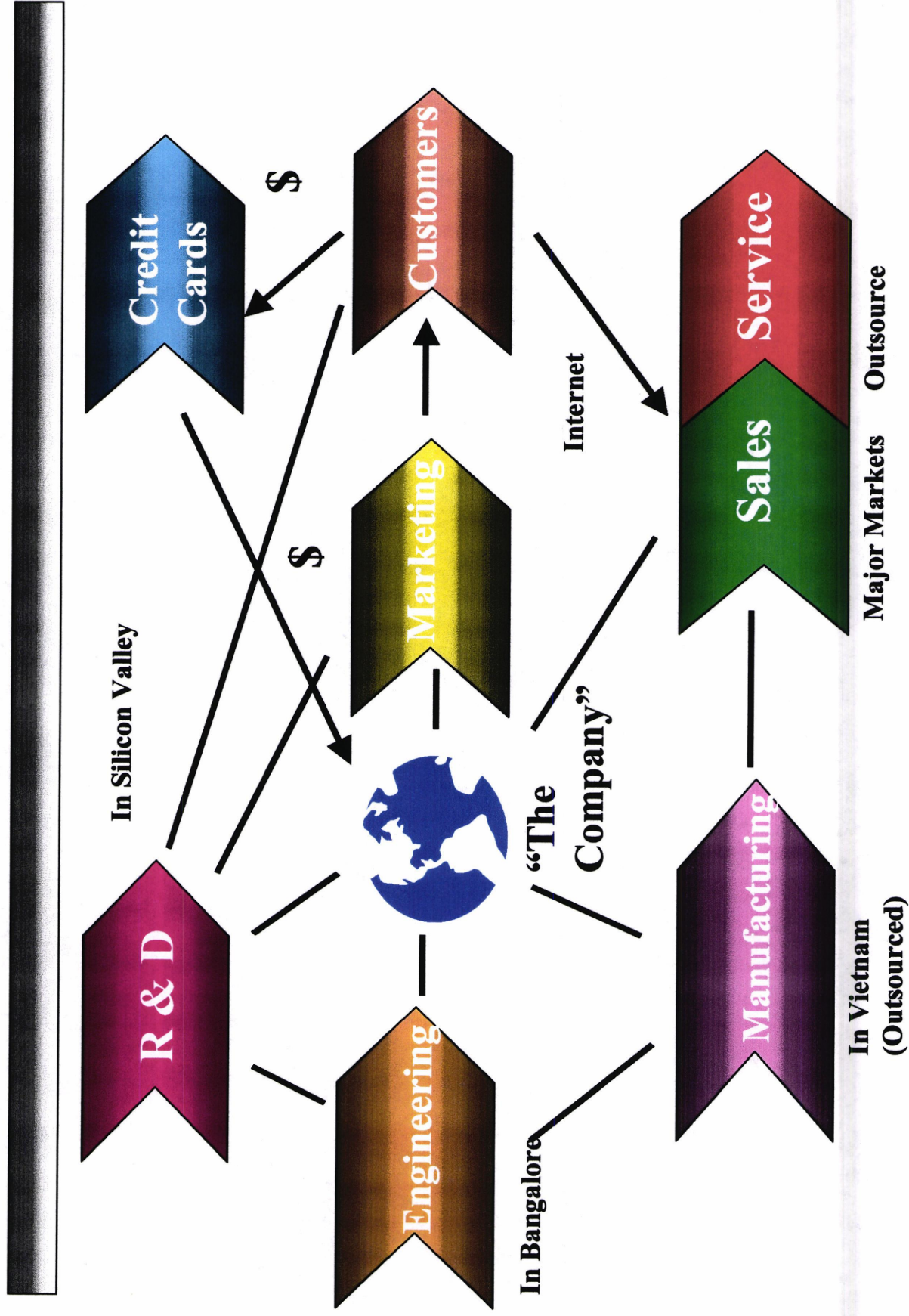
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